

Fundación Eugenio Granell



INSANIA

**IVÁN
PRIETO**

"And then appeared emphatic, as modelled in nocturnal hollowness, the immense, unknown green man".
Eugenio Granell (The green man)

Disturbing, moving and dreamlike. The visual art of Iván Prieto (O Barco de Valdeorras 1978) has been compared with the work of Juan Muñoz -because of the uneasiness that is capable of transmitting and the loneliness of his characters-, with the photography of the Austrian Diane Arbus -with who shares a taste for the freak- or the movie characters of David Lynch. It is known that Prieto uses the features of people close to him as a starting point for the elaboration of many of his sculptures, an aspect that has led critics to compare him with George Seagal, who also uses moulds. On the other hand, the frozen poses of his characters and his sense of installation have linked him to Erwin Wurm.

These similarities contextualize the work of Iván Prieto in an international orbit, who also finds here, in his native Galicia, a very close referent such as Eugenio Granell. Both start from the creative freedom demanded by surrealism, escaping from the corset of reality and recreating their own universe. One, where women have a very prominent role as evidenced in this sample. Prieto's tightrope walkers are a constant throughout his career, alluding to a perpetual state "on the wire", as he himself maintains. Women with rounded shapes like "Pumpkin Girl" but also geometric, in "Geometric twins" we find an outstanding formal parallelism with the sculpture of Eugenio Granell (think of "La dama de Fontainebleau"). Some busts of the sculptor from Ourense, such as "Pájarosen la cabeza", recall us the taste of surrealism for the liberation of the subconscious and at the same time remind us of one of the most Granellian characters, the bird-woman.



When the characters represented are male, we find in both artists a strong tendency towards androgynous beings, a Surrealist debt of Platonic influence, and in the specific case of Iván Prieto, almost always with painted lips. In this sense, the character of "Ícaro" stands out, one of the most self-referential sculptures from Ourense. This mythological figure is a tribute to the fragility that the sculptor carried out when he lived in Berlin, where the change of scene triggered severe asthmatic attacks in him, an aspect that ended up being reflected in his work. This is how the inflatables are born, characters that deflate, suffocated by a hostile environment.

If theatre was important in Granell's work, in Ivan Prieto's emotions take the form of disguise. Often the characters of the orensano are rabbits or a hybrid between the human and the animal. Masks that workp as parapets used by their figures to bear reality. Here we are witnessing an installation starring puppets with hieratic and colourful characters, unable to smile.

Today, the concept of style has been overcome and dissolved, and far from pigeonholing the artistic language of Iván Prieto, his work shows an incessant quest to circumvent the conscious faculties. It is also palpable in his way of approaching matter, a kind of meditation where he tends to replicate elements automatically. This is reflected in his work "Craziness", a ceramic made by a cluster of hands, as if each palm were a thought. A disguise, a trance, a frowning green neurosis.

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